

LISTING OF CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior and previous versions and listings of claims in this application for patent, adding no new matter:

We claim:

Claims 1-38 (cancelled)

Claim 39 (currently amended): Apparatus for bonding soft biological tissue having an incision therein, comprising:

forceps adapted to grip a portion of the tissue on both sides of the incision, the forceps having a pair of opposed arms mounted in sleeve at one end, and having another end configured for grasping between the opposed tips of said arms;

electrodes secured to said forceps for contacting said tissue portion; and

an adjustable stop member that limits the extent to which the forceps may be deformed and prevents overexertion of pressure on grasped tissue by limiting the maximum force transferred to the tissue, despite increased pressure exerted on the forceps by a user, extent to which the electrodes may compress said tissue portion the stop member being adjustable to accommodate the bonding of tissues of varying thicknesses to provide tissue welding that forms a weld to reconnect the tissue.

Claim 40 (previously presented): The apparatus of claim 39, wherein said electrodes are dimensioned to have a volume which is at least 5 times that of the tissue portion volume.

Claim 41 (previously presented): The apparatus of claim 40, wherein said electrodes are made of a metal with a high heat conductivity.

Claims 42-64 (canceled).

Claim 65 (previously presented): The apparatus of claim 39, wherein the forceps have two arms, and the adjustable stop member is positioned between the two arms of the forceps.

Claim 66 (previously presented): The apparatus of claim 39, wherein the adjustable stop member comprises a replaceable lug of selectable length positioned between the two forceps.

Claim 67 (previously presented): The apparatus of claim 39, wherein the adjustable stop member comprises one or more spacers.

Claim 68 (previously presented): The apparatus of claim 39, wherein the adjustable stop member comprises an adjustable knob.

Claim 69-70 (withdrawn).

Claim 71 (currently amended): Apparatus for bonding soft biological tissue having an incision therein, comprising:

forceps adapted to grip a portion of the tissue on both sides of the incision, the forceps having a pair of opposed arms mounted in sleeve at one end, and having another end configured for grasping between the opposed tips of said arms;

electrodes secured to said forceps for contacting said tissue portion; and

stop means for selectively limiting the extent to which the forceps may be deformed to provide tissue welding that forms a weld to reconnect the tissue, the stop means further preventing the overexertion of pressure on grasped tissue by limiting the maximum grasping force transferred to the tissue, despite increased pressure exerted on the forceps by a user. {{.}}; and

~~the stop means further limiting the extent to which the electrodes may compress said tissue portion.~~

Claim 72 (previously presented): The apparatus of claim 71, wherein the stop means comprises a replaceable lug of selectable length positioned between the two forceps.

Claim 73 (previously presented): The apparatus of claim 71, wherein the stop means comprises one or more spacers.

Claim 74 (previously presented): The apparatus of claim 71, wherein the stop means comprises an adjustable knob.

Claims 75-78 (withdrawn).